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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the situation of a non-native speaker of English who is educated in teaching English to speakers of other languages in the United States, and then returns to his or her country of origin to teach. This teacher encountered many difficulties and much resistance to the teaching methodologies learned in American graduate schools in her native culture. This paper investigates the extent to which other teachers trained in the United States encountered similar difficulties when returning to the native countries. The teacher, in this case, recounts her experiences in Taiwan. This study contains interviews with four Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) graduate students (three from Taiwan, one from Thailand) who received their master's degrees in the United States and returned to their homelands to teach after completing their studies. Three questions are addressed: (1) To what extent do Master's (MA) TESOL programs fulfill the needs and expectations of non-native English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teachers? (2) What are the factors that hinder the fulfillment of the needs and expectations of non-native EFL teachers? and (3) What recommendations and implications can be drawn from this study for MA TESOL programs? It is found that there are no EFL programs that specifically cater to the needs of those planning to teach abroad. It is suggested that a collaborative model of a MA TESOL program be created to cater to these students. Suggestions for making the program more responsive to such students are included. Appendices A and B contain a questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions. (Contains 23 references.) (KFT)

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What Do They Need from MA TESOL Programs:

A Case Study of Four Non-Native EFL Teachers

Yi-Hsuan Gloria Lo

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Teaching English to

Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

March 1, 2001

St. Louis, Missouri.

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Introduction

I received my Master's in language education in 1994 and went back to Taiwan to teach. During the years of 1996-1999, I was an English instructor in college in Taiwan. I encountered many challenges from the classes I taught in which students learned English as their foreign language (EFL). Among these challenges were the issue of applying what I learned in the U.S. to the specific setting of Taiwan. I found that many of the theories I learned (e.g. the whole language approach) that were developed in a Western cultural context were problematic when applied to teaching in a non-Western socio-cultural context. Resistance to my teaching methodologies not only came from the students but also from my colleagues who viewed language teaching and learning from a very different perspective. I wondered if others who received their Master's in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MA TESOL) and went back to their native countries to teach faced challenges similar to those I had been facing in Taiwan. In other words, to what extent did their MA TESOL program address and fulfill their expectations for entering their MA TESOL program and their needs for teaching in a different socio-cultural context?

Several studies have been conducted regarding this issue (Burnaby, 1989; Carvers, 1988; English & Robert, 1989; Heiman, 1994; Johnston, 1994; Medgyes, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 1999). Liu (1999) used a survey to explore the needs of 59 non-native speaker students in her MA TESOL program (20 in 1994, 23 in 1995, and 16 in 1996; 28 Mandarin-speaking Taiwanese, 2 mainland Chinese, 12 Korean, 11 Japanese, 2 Malaysians, 2 Indonesians, 1 Jordanian, and 1 Hispanic). The results of the survey showed that the majority (64%) of the students who were non-native speakers indicated that there was a significant difference between teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL and teaching English as a second language (TESL). When asked whether or not they considered the acquisition theories and

teaching methodologies they had learned to be very useful, only 20 (34%) replied that that they were very useful. As to the question of whether they believed they had the English proficiency to be a truly qualified teacher, only 8 (14%) said "yes." Asked if they would they would prefer a course on explicit grammar to one on language usage, 47 (80%) in her survey chose "usage" and only 3 (5%) "grammar." Furthermore, to the question of whether the program should incorporate a language improvement component in all its courses, 55 (93 %) replied "yes."

Johnston (1994) conducted research using a qualitative approach, mainly through interview and observation, to supplement language educators' knowledge and understanding of MA TESOL programs. To answer his research questions of the initial expectations and needs of incoming MA TESOL students and to explore the relationship between student needs and expectations and the nature of the program, Johnston interviewed five MA TESOL students; three non-native speakers from Taiwan, Korean, and Russia and two native speakers from the U.S. who were currently studying in the program.

The findings of his study showed that these students viewed their MA TESOL program as providing classroom teaching improvement, theory, knowledge, professional development, sabbatical, academic stage, and piece of paper which ensures certain status and opens up career possibilities. Johnston (1994) proposed an alternative framework: Domains of teacher development (classroom teaching, professional domain, and knowledge base) to help conceptualize the needs and expectations of other students in similar programs.

Liu's survey (1999) and Johnston's qualitative approach (1994) have contributed to our understanding of the needs and expectations of the students who were currently in the MA TESOL programs. Few studies, however, have been conducted to explore the needs and expectations from the perspective of MA TESOL graduates who received their degree and returned to their native countries to teach. Based upon my experience, if I had not gone back

to teach in Taiwan after I received my degree in the U.S., I would not have been able to clearly specify my needs and expectations for MA TESOL programs nor would I have the same kind of understanding of the program as I do now.

It is anticipated that more and more non-native speaker students will pursue their MA TESOL programs in the U.S., (Govardhan, Nayar & Sheorey, 1997; Polio, 1994) due to the trend of globalization in this new millennium. It is hoped that this study will help teacher educators become aware of the different needs and expectations of the MA TESOL programs as the population of the students in these programs becomes more and more diverse. It is also hoped that the findings gained from this study can be used to help modify MA TESOL programs in a way that can fulfill not only the needs of those who will be ESL teachers in the U.S. but also of those non-native EFL teachers who will return to positions as EFL teachers in non-English speaking countries.

In this study, I interviewed four MA TESOL graduates (two male and two female; three from Taiwan and one from Thailand) who received their degree from four different MA TESOL programs in the U.S., returned to their native countries to teach and returned again to pursue their doctoral degree in the U.S.

Three questions were addressed in this study.

1. To what extent do MA TESOL programs fulfill the needs and expectations of non-native EFL teachers?
2. What are the factors that hinder the fulfillment of the needs and expectations of non-native EFL teachers?
3. What recommendations and implications can be drawn from this study for MA TESOL programs?

Methodology

Participants. Four participants, two male (one from Taiwan, one from Thailand) and two female (both from Taiwan) with different teaching experience who received their MA TESOL from four different universities in the U.S. participated in this study.

Cheng

Cheng, a male from Taiwan, is currently working on his Ph.D. degree in a Department of Language Education. Before he came back to work on his Ph.D., he taught for 2 years in a private junior high school after having received his Master's degree in a TESOL program. Before his Master's program, the only teaching experience he had was tutoring junior high school students and his colleagues in the human resources department of a supermarket company.

Ling-Ling

Ling-ling, a female from Taiwan, had taught social studies in a private high school before she pursued her master's degree in TESOL. Before she returned to the U.S. to work on her Ph.D. degree, she taught in private high schools for 5.5 years. She is currently working on her Ph.D. in a Language Education Department.

Lai

Lai, a male from Thailand, is also a Ph.D. student in a Language Education Department. Before he came to the U.S. to work for his master's degree in TESOL, he had already taught in college in Thailand for 2 years. After receiving his degree, he went back to teach in a graduate school for 10 years before he returned to the U.S. for his Ph.D. degree.

Mei-mei

Mei-mei, a female from Taiwan, is pursuing her Ph.D. in curriculum studies. She taught in college in Taiwan for four years before she returned to the U.S. for her Ph.D.

degree. Prior to her MA TESOL program, she taught children's English in Taiwan for one year.

Instruments and procedures: A questionnaire (Appendix A) comprised of six parts (background, decision, goals, program, teaching, and suggestions) was administered to the participants through e-mail. The questionnaire was followed by a face-to-face interview with these participants. Then, a face-to-face interview (Appendix B) was conducted with these participants. The interview lasted at least 2-3 hours, depending how much the participants wanted to share with the interviewer. The interviewees who are from Taiwan could choose to answer the interview questions in either their native language, Mandarin Chinese, or in English since the interviewer is a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese. Transcripts of the interviews were sent back to all participants for member checks and further comments. Questions that were generated from reviewing the transcripts were asked either via e-mail, phone, and/or face to face conversation.

Findings

Table 1 summarizes the findings from the questionnaire, which includes the informants' backgrounds (gender, nationality, teaching experience and courses taught before and after MA TESOL program), goals for entering MA TESOL programs, requirements and characteristics of their MA TESOL programs. It also demonstrates the ratio of native speakers to non-native speakers in the program, and their perceptions of needs while in the program, of degrees of interactions with native speakers, of transferability/applicability of theories to EFL teaching, and of difficulties in application as well as suggestions offered for their MA TESOL programs.

Following the table, I will further explore the findings from the questionnaire with supplements from the interview data to answer the questions raised in this study.

Table 1 Summary of Findings

Categories	Cheng	Ling-ling	Lai	Mei-mei
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female
Nationality	Taiwan	Taiwan	Thailand	Taiwan
Teaching experience (duration) before MA TESOL program	Tutoring English (1.5 years)	A teacher in junior high school (4 years)	An instructor in college (2 years)	A teacher in cram school (1 year)
Courses Taught	Adult English	Social Studies	Reading and Grammar	Children's English
Goals for entering MA TESOL programs	To be an EFL teacher in Taiwan	To be an EFL teacher in Taiwan	To be an EFL teacher in college in Thailand	To be an EFL teacher in Taiwan
Requirements for entering a particular MA TESOL	A TOEFL score of 580 and GRE	A TOEFL score of 600 and GRE (optional)	A bachelor's degree in English or education and a TOEFL score of 550, and GRE	A TOEFL score of 550 and GRE (verbal and math parts at least a score of 900)
Ratio of native speakers vs. non-native speakers in the program	1:1	1:1	5:1	10:1
Characteristics of their MA TESOL programs	Under Linguistics department	Under Education department	Under English Department	Under Education Department
Practicum	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Requirements for graduation	30 credit hours GPA over 3.00 (B)	36 credit hours	42 credit hours and a comprehensive examination	36 credit hours
Perceived needs while in the program	Teaching methodology	Teaching methodology	Language teaching related theories	Oral proficiency and cultural understanding
Interactions with native speakers (on a scale of 10)	7	5	9	9
Teaching experience after receiving MA TESOL degree (before coming back to U.S. to work for Ph.D.	Taught English for 2 years in private senior high school in Taiwan	Taught English for 6 years in private junior high school and 0.5 year in vocational senior high school in Taiwan	Taught English for 10 years in college in Thailand	Taught English for 4 years in college in Taiwan
Perceived transferability/applicability to EFL teaching	5	3	9	8
Perceived difficulties in application	*Obstacles from administration *motivation	*Class size *Standardized tests *Entrance examinations *Educational system *Pressure from	No	Socio-cultural factors (e.g. ideology, authority, etc)

		parents, administration		
Suggestions for their MA TESOL program	The program should include more real applications in EFL setting	Integrate the needs of EFL teachers to the program which is mainly ESL dominated	More rigorous and more theory-oriented	Offer more choices of courses and courses for EFL

What were the four MA TESOL graduates' goals, expectations and needs when they applied for their MA TESOL programs?

The four participants all indicated that they chose TESOL as their major because they wanted to get their Master's degree in TESOL program and to be EFL teachers in their home countries. Improving their English proficiency, getting a better understanding of American culture, learning how to teach English and receiving a prestigious degree from the U.S. were their main concerns.

Cheng expected to gain knowledge in English and understanding about the culture.

> I think you teach English, but beyond English, there's culture, especially American culture or English culture. You have to learn culture beyond language.

Ling-ling did not know exactly what to expect of her MA TESOL program except that she believed that getting a degree in this field would ensure her a better career because she enjoyed English and teaching. In addition she wanted to learn teaching methodology.

Mei-mei only had one year of part-time teaching experience prior to her MA TESOL program. She believed that the experience in studying in the U.S. and interacting with native speakers helped her become more aware of the language learning process, learn what English words really mean in different contexts, and understand the English language deeper and better.

> Through the same experience I have, you know, go through the whole process. I think it is very important for me to teach my students through these experiences. I think as a learner and teacher at the same time. You will really know what works and what

> you need through these experiences. I mean if I don't interact with native speakers in their native language I never know what words really mean. You know sometimes the word does not mean what it really means. It has so many meanings. You have to interact with native speakers and realize it and how you can really apply to a real setting.

For Mei-mei, this kind of learning is authentic. She deeply believed that learning how to use authentic language was an important part of her learning in her program.

> Well, I do not like grammar and vocabulary. I really like to combine language and culture. I really want to know the spirit of the language. I think in Taiwan I don't get that much education from my college degree.

When I asked Lai why he did not stay in his own country to pursue his MA TESOL degree, Lai provided the following reasons for choosing to study in the U.S.. First, he tried to avoid the program in his country.

> I think it would be easier to get a Master's degree from here than from my own country because it would take longer. I would have to write a thesis. Normally it takes like five years for a Master's. Students have to study like 60 credit hours. It's not difficult to get in but it is not easy to get out. You have to be very patient. So, in a way, I tried to avoid my system in Thailand.

Secondly, and more essentially as Lai indicated,

> It's a hidden policy. You know. Getting a degree from an English speaking country will make me more qualified because of direct input and exposure to the language.

<u>To what extent did their MA TESOL programs fulfill their needs while teaching in their native countries</u>?

I did not intend to ask the participants' views on whether or not their MA TESOL programs were more theory-oriented or practice-oriented, "Theory vs. Practice" however, was a common discourse that emerged from the transcripts of the questionnaire and interviews when asked what the participants liked most and least about their programs. Their responses revealed the extent to which their MA TESOL programs fulfilled their

expectations for entering the MA TESOL programs and needs they realized after they went back to their home countries to teach.

Cheng explained that most of the courses in his program were too theory-based.

> … for me practical could be something on learn a lot of curriculum design or lead your students to participate in classroom activities, some knowledge like that. Theoretical could be previous research. Or let you know a lot of research about this course. For example, second language acquisition (SLA) is very typical for the theoretical class. You learn a lot about previous hypotheses theory or frameworks about second language acquisition.

Cheng suggested that half of the courses should be theory-based, focusing on students' knowledge in teaching English; the other half should be practice-based, focusing on how to teach English in ESL and EFL environments. He elaborated:

> For example, traditional grammar. If a teacher doesn't understand grammar rules, how can he or she teaches grammar? That's why a lot of American teachers in Taiwan they can not explain grammar very well because they don't learn a lot in grammar. You still have to learn grammar. You know it and you understand it and you learn how to teach it. Then you can teach it. You can not teach it because you can speak English.

Like Cheng, Ling-ling thinks that her MA TESOL program was more theoretical rather than practical. She claimed that the professors' approaches were theory-oriented because they did not emphasize how to apply the theories to real classroom practices. "I think those professors were more theory-oriented so that they could not direct students to think."

By "theoretical," Ling-ling also refers to the focus of the coursework.

> The whole program is about what researcher said about one language learning theory and then other researchers talked about other language learning theories that might contradict to what the previous one said. The nature of theory is to test others and to be tested. As for how to practice, it seems to me that it was not the focus on the program.

Mei-mei perceived the importance of both theory and practice. Mei-mei, however, said that she preferred application. For Mei-mei, theory is only basic understanding. How to apply theory is more advanced knowledge that one has to gain.

> One the other hand, how to apply to your classroom for me is more important. For example, Linguistic Theory. I mean I liked it---those trees. Actually it helped your basic understanding. It's just interesting to learn that. But that's just only basic idea. Just help your understanding, and just build up your theoretical based. Probably furthermore we need methodologies—how to apply.

Unlike Cheng, Ling-ling and Mei-mei, Lai liked the fact that the focus of his MA TESOL program was more theoretical.

> Well, I liked theoretical grounding, the theoretical stance of the program. Because most of the courses will focus the theoretical aspects. .... All these are theoretical in nature and I like them.

Cheng and Ling-ling taught in high schools in Taiwan and had to prepare students for entrance examinations. Lai , on the other hand, had much more freedom to test the theories learned in his program on the graduate level courses he taught in Thailand after he received his master's degree in TESOL. The age of his students also allowed Lai to be more theory-oriented. As Lai said, "What techniques to use in class is up to me. I think a MA program in any way should be more theoretical than practical."

What were the perceived barriers for applying what they learned to where they taught?

When asked if there had been such a program called TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) as opposed to TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language), three of them, except Lai, said that they would like to apply for such a program. They perceived there were differences between ESL and EFL and believed that studying in a TEFL program would better address and more intensely focus on issues and needs derived from an EFL environment. Cheng said, "I think maybe EFL could be more suitable for me than ESL

because Taiwan's setting. I expect EFL could include more problems and applications specific in EFL setting."

Ling-ling points out the underlying assumption of her program.

> It assumed it's an ESL environment. The professor did not tell you that you could design lesson plans for EFL. The only focus was teaching English as a second language (ESL). For native speakers, that was what they needed because chances were that they would teach ESL after their graduation. For us [EFL teachers], it takes time to transfer from ESL to EFL.

Having the teaching experience back in Taiwan, Mei-mei wishes that her program could have distinguished ESL and EFL.

> I mean the purposes are different and the applications are different. Of course the approach will be different also. As an EFL teacher in non-English speaking country the approach will be much more different because your audience. The environments are different; the cultures are different; the applications are different. So, everything is almost different. The course materials should be different.

Teaching at the graduate level, Lai did not have as many constraints as the three other informants. Lai said that changing the title of the program did not change anything for him. "It does not matter to me because it's up to me." Lai said.

<u>What were the perceived degree of transferability/applicability of their MA TESOL program to their EFL teaching</u>?

Regarding the transferability/applicability of what the informants learned from their MA TESOL programs to their EFL teaching on a 1 to 10 scale, Cheng indicated 7, Ling-ling 3, Mei-mei 8 and Lai 9. It seems to me that the lower the educational level one taught, the lower degree of transferability/applicability.

As both Cheng and Ling-ling taught in private high schools in Taiwan, they had encountered similar issues. Cheng's comments clearly outlined the obstacles in application.

> If there are any difficulties using these theories or applications, I would say something like Taiwan's big class size, students' attitude, school requirement, and exam orientation.

Cheng provided an example to illustrate his point.

> I used to be a substitute teacher in a private junior high school. The belief of the principle on teaching English is to memorize. Memorize by rote. It's not very suitable or very compatible with second language acquisition. My knowledge from SLA is that students can make a lot of mistakes and students can scribble a lot in their first writing… But the situation in Taiwan is totally different. We have to admit that. Teaching writing is very product-oriented. You got the topic and turn the paper in and you got a grade. So it's not so called process writing.

Ling-ling made similar comments in terms of class size and the education system.

> In Taiwan, we have big size of class. All the theories in TESOL were under the assumption that the class size was small like 20 or 15. This is the biggest difference. … I do not think it is only a problem for private schools. I believe the whole educational system in Taiwan is the same. Learning and instruction are led by standardized tests. Students under this kind of educational system have to be forced to learn in a certain way. The English teachers also have to follow certain schedule and can not do anything as they like either. You do not have so much time. There are many constraints too. Students feel there is no fun learning English. I do not see any fun teaching English either. So, what one learns [in MA TESOL] can never be applied.

Although Mei-mei provided a relatively high rating (8 out of 10) to the perceived degree of transferability/applicability of her program to her college teaching in Taiwan this does not mean that Mei-mei could apply what she learned in her program to her EFL teaching in Taiwan without difficulty. Unlike Cheng and Ling-ling who experienced the challenges derived from the rigid standardized curricula and tests in the educational system, Mei-mei experienced great resistance from her college students, colleagues and the whole school system to the socio-cultural dimensions of the ideology embedded in her teaching methodology. She commented,

> When I was teaching, there were so many things that I learned in my Master's program that I wanted to apply to my classroom. It really challenges my system, my students, my colleagues and everything because it is just so different. But the bad thing is that of course frustration comes out. It doesn't work always work. They always challenge your American way of teaching. It does not work in the Chinese culture or Taiwanese culture. Sometimes you freaked out students. They do not really like it.

Again, Mei-mei pointed out that she wished that her program could have addressed this issue while she was in the program so that she could be better prepared to face the frustration.

> My MA program did no really tell me how to deal with those frustrations. But I think it's because they don't prepare for ESL/EFL from other countries because education-base is here in the USA so that the program and the materials always work here. They do not really prepare for non-native speakers.

Unlike Mei-mei, who had absorbed a lot of American culture and wanted to apply that to her teaching, Lai believed what he learned from his program was one thing; how to apply them to his teaching in Thailand was another. It depended on the context. As he said, "Everything should be contextualized."

Lai did not perceive any problems with transferring/applying the theories he learned from his MA TESOL program because he believes he should not be constrained by certain ESL theories. Lai believes that he should know best how to teach EFL in Thailand because he was a learner as well as a teacher. He perceived differences between ESL and EFL as a rationale for practicing what he believes as the best way to teach in Thailand. Most of the time, he adheres to traditional methods (e.g. grammar translation) that have been practiced for years in Thailand. He does not see a necessity to change the practice. Thus, for him, there are no difficulties with transferability and applicability of language teaching learning theories.

Discussion

According to Liu (1999), of the students enrolled in the TESOL teacher education programs in North America, Britain, and Australia, approximately 40% were Non-native speakers (NNSs). The majority of these NNSs will return to their home countries to teach. In the present study, all the informants indicated that they knew they would return home to teach after they completed their MA TESOL programs.

The findings suggest that several assumptions are being made in MA TESOL programs that need to be closely examined.

Assumption 1: Exposure to an English speaking environment will improve non-native EFL teachers' English proficiency.

While three participants mentioned that their MA TESOL program offered linguistics-related courses and acknowledged the importance of the courses, two of them pointed out that they were still concerned about their English language ability even after they received their Master's degree. MA TESOL programs should not assume that non-native EFL teachers' language would be improved simply by the fact that non-native EFL teachers pursue their degree in an English speaking environment. Non-native language teachers are, themselves, perpetually language learners. Research has shown that language proficiency has been the biggest concern for non-native English teachers (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Liu, 1999, Medgyes, 1983; Johnston, 1994; Medgyes, 1983; Murdoch, 1994; Polio & Wilson-Duffy, 1998). As Cheng and Mei-mei in this study pointed out, they had always been concerned about how proficient their English was after one and a half years of studying in their TESOL programs in the U.S..

Assumption 2: Learning about the language means knowing how to teach the language.

Researchers have been constantly discussing the issue of the gap between theory and practice (Clarke, 1994; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 1992; Sadtono, 1995). One of the faulty assumptions that MA TESOL programs have made is to assume that knowing the English language will enable their students to teach English. One of the reasons that three of the four informants indicated that their programs tended to be theoretical instead of being practical was that their programs placed great emphasis on the linguistic part of the English language (how the language works) than on English language pedagogy (how to teach it).

This assumption also reflects upon the program design. Three of the four participants' MA TESOL programs showed a separation between the language courses (e.g., transformational grammar, traditional grammar, etc) and the language teaching methodology courses (e.g. , teaching resources, practicum). The language courses were offered throughout their program while the teaching methodology courses were only provided until the last semester of their coursework. Although a practicum was offered, three of the participants still felt the need to integrate teaching methodology into their language coursework.

Assumption 3: Theories gained in ESL environment will hold true in EFL environment.

All of the informants indicated that their programs did not differentiate between ESL and EFL. While there were no courses specifically offered for EFL, three of them said that they would prefer to pursue their degree in MA TEFL instead of TESL because such a program would address their needs more precisely. They particularly indicated that that they would love to have faculty members who have had teaching experience in EFL countries. It was very evident that these EFL teachers had faced problems in the transferability/applicability of the theories they had learned in MA TESOL programs to the practice in their EFL environments.

The interviews showed that factors contributing to these difficulties included a centralized educational system, standardized tests, large class sizes, administration requirements and students' learning attitudes toward English (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Liu, 1999). Unlike what Mei-mei had expected from her MA TESOL program, "The environments are different; the cultures are different; the applications are different. So, everything is almost different. The course materials should be different." These salient issues facing EFL teachers seemed to suggest that the research findings gained from the ESL context can not totally be transferred to EFL settings.

The perspective of research on aspects of English language teaching can be biased due to the lack of sensitivity to the contexts and to the constraints on the transferability/applicability of the findings (Nayar, 1997). In other words, Nayar suggests that the knowledge and expertise generated in the context of ESL situations are very likely to be overgeneralized as valid knowledge for other countries, whose contexts are different than, if not totally opposite from, ESL ones.

Assumption 4: MA TESOL programs assume that teaching methodologies are value free.

Second language acquisition (SLA) has been treated as the wisdom to others passed down through publications and through educational dissemination to others in other countries. MA TESOL programs "sell" this wisdom to the many non-native EFL teachers who pursue their degree in these programs. Seldom do MA TESOL programs take into account that their programs do not only "sell" knowledge on SLA and its implied teaching methodologies. These methods derived in the ESL context entail the Western culture and its values.

"Methodological dogmatism" termed by Reid (1995/6, p.3 cited in Liu, 1999, p. 199) promotes new methodologies and theories (e.g. communicative approach, Whole Language philosophy, etc) which originated in the West while devaluing the traditional teaching methods that have been widely practiced in non-western countries. " Western ethnocentric ideologies" (Liu, 1999, p.199) operating in MA TESOL programs thus overlook the needs of the non-native EFL teachers. It is undoubtedly assumed by the faculty members, the native speakers and non-native speakers that the non-native EFL teachers come to the Center of the World, the West, to bring the knowledge back to their non-Western countries.

The resistance that Mei-mei sensed from her college students in Taiwan and her frustration with her students demonstrates the overlooked complexities of the application of

Western teaching methodologies as well as the socio-cultural dynamics in non-Western countries (Babcock, 1993; Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Carver, 1988; Heiman, 1994, Lie, 1998).

Suggestions

In reviewing nearly 200 institutions offering graduate programs for prospective ESL/EFL teachers, Govardhan, Nayar and Sheorey (1997) concluded that no program in the U.S. caters specifically to the needs of those desirous of teaching abroad, including both native and non-native speakers. Despite the fact the native EFL teachers are greatly needed and many native speaker graduates also look forward to teaching abroad, like non-native EFL prospective teachers in MA TESOL programs, their needs are also not met. Many trained native speakers who teach in Asian countries find themselves inadequately prepared for the EFL teaching. Like the three EFL teachers, they face the gap between the theories learned in MA TESOL programs and the real practices abroad. Overwhelmed by the sharp socio-cultural differences, some of the native EFL teachers have to return home before they fulfill their signed contracts (Liu, 1999).

Prospective non-native EFL teachers in MA TESOL programs are potentially invaluable resources for native speakers in the program who want to teach abroad or in ESL countries because the central issue NS ESL/EFL teachers will face is: How do they better understand and adjust their pedagogy to teach the students (both ESL and EFL) who are from different cultural backgrounds other than theirs? While prospective non-native EFL teachers need to understand more about American culture as well as to improve their language proficiency, potential native-speaking EFL and ESL teachers also need to gain more background knowledge about their students as well as to learn a better approach to teach their native language.

It is suggested that an integrated collaborative model of MA TESOL program should be designed to meet the needs of native and non-native ESL/EFL teachers. In this integrated

collaborative model both native and non-native speakers would work as a team to help each other increase their knowledge of language as well as of culture; to, in effect, bridge the gap between learning/speaking a language and teaching a language (Medgyes, 1999). For example, a native and a non-native speaker can be paired up to study phonology. The native speaker can demonstrate how a certain sound is pronounced whereas the non-native speakers can explain to his/her partner the difficulty s/he has experienced. They can work as a team to come up with an action plan and to detect how the problem that non-native speaker experiences can be solved. Through the collaboration, the non-native speakers can improve their English ability and the native speakers gain the knowledge of the potential difficulties that non-native speakers might encounter as well as the experience of how to teach their native language to EFL/ESL students.

Another suggestion for this integrated collaborative model is to pair native speakers and non-native speakers while they do their practicum in an ESL setting (Polio & Wilson-Duffy, 1998). Non-native speakers might be intimidated by the fact that they are required to use "English only" throughout their ESL teaching. Working with a native speaker can provide the non-native speaker linguistic support while non-native speakers can also provide insight into some ESL learners who share a similar cultural background (e.g. students from Asia). As a result, the native speaker can be more sensitive to and have a better understanding of the socio-cultural background of ESL students.

It is also strongly recommended that MA TESOL programs integrate EFL based research findings into the program. The knowledge gained from these research findings will not only better prepare non-native EFL teachers after they go back home to teach, but also provide broader views on language learning in different contexts, which will be beneficial to native speakers who want to go abroad to teach.

EFL based research findings do not necessarily come from journal articles. The autobiographies (Clarke, 1994; Kamhi-Stein, 1999) of these non-native EFL teachers can become part of the knowledge base. Their experiences in learning in general situated in their socio-cultural contexts and their perceptions and concerns about learning English are valuable for MA TESOL programs. Instead of offering courses to teach American culture, I propose allowing native and non-native speakers to again work as a team to explore each other's culture and to examine each other's cultural assumptions, creating a win-win learning environment for both non-native and native speakers in the program. Non native speakers gain a better understanding about American culture by interacting with real people and exploring a particular issue in depth. At the same time, native speakers, instead of stereotyping students from other cultures, can prepare themselves, by means of working with non-native speakers, to face their ESL learners and to work in an EFL setting.

Notably, no one in my study mentioned that they had something to offer to their MA TESOL programs. Instead, they all hoped to learn and bring something back to their home countries. The results of the study show that while it is essential to reexamine the assumptions held by MA TESOL programs, it is equally important to change the mindset of the stakeholders (faculty members, native and non-native ESL/EFL students) in MA TESOL programs. Further studies need to be conducted to understand the needs and expectations for MA TESOL programs from the perspective of the faculty members as well as from the native speakers in the program.

Conclusion

The suggestions above are based on the premise that all stakeholders including both native and non-native teachers, program designers and faculty members have to believe that non-native speakers are not empty vases that need to be filled with Western ideologies. Rather, they come from different cultural backgrounds with real experiences in learning the

English language. Only when such a mindset is in place will it be possible to create an integrated collaborative program that will meet the needs of most, if not all, of the prospective native and non-native ESL/EFL teachers.

How can native ESL/EFL teachers genuinely appreciate the differences in and further develop a better understanding of their future ESL/EFL learners if the design of the program does not create two way interaction between native and non-native speakers?

How can non-native prospective EFL teachers believe that they do have something offer to their program if their autobiographies, their English learning experiences, and the socio-cultural understanding of their native countries are not valued in MA TESOL programs?

After all, how can MA TESOL educators convince others about their theories if they fail to address the issue of diversity within their own programs?

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

Teaching background prior to enrolling in an MA TESOL program

1. Did you teach before enrolling in your MA TESOL program?
2. If the answer to number 1 is "yes", how many years experience did you have before enrolling in your MA TESOL program?
3. What subjects and levels did you teach?

Decisions to enroll in an MA TESOL program

1. Had you thought about going to another country to pursue your MA TESOL? If so, to what other country?
2. For EFL teachers, were there any MA TESOL programs in your home country?

MA TESOL program in which you studied

1. Where did you study for your MA TESOL?
2. Was there a separate department of TESOL or did you study in a related department? Under what school/college and department did you study?
3. How long did it take to fulfill your department's requirements for graduation?
4. Did you pursue your degree full-time or part-time?
5. What were the admissions requirements for your program?
6. What were the graduation requirements for your program?
7. What courses were required?
8. How many credit hours were necessary to fulfill your degree requirements?
9. Did your MA TESOL program include a practicum?
10. When you entered your MA TESOL program, did you know where you would ultimately teach, the course, or the level?
11. What elective courses did you take?
12. Do you wish you could have taken more elective courses? If so, from what disciplines?
13. In your opinion did you ever take classes in your MA TESOL program in which you questioned the applicability of the material of the material presented to your teaching experience in your home country?
14. In a required course in your MA TESOL program, approximately how many students would you find in a class?
    a. less than 5 b. 5 – 10 c. 11 – 15 d. 16 – 20 e. more than 20
15. In a required course in your MA TESOL program, approximately how many students who were **non-native speakers** of English would you find in a class?
    a. less than 5 b. 5 – 10 c. 11 – 15 d. 16 – 20 e. more than 20
16. What was the approximate ratio of non-native speakers of English to native speakers of English in your MA TESOL program?
17. In your MA TESOL program, how many classes did you take that were *specifically* for future ESL teachers? Please list the classes you remember.
18. In your MA TESOL program, how many classes did you take that were *specifically* for future EFL teachers? Please list the classes you remember.

Questions on a scale of 1 to 10 (1= the lowest score; 10=the highest)

1. To what degree did your MA TESOL program fulfill your
   Personal goals _____
   Academic goals _____

Professional goals _____

2. How would you rate your experience in your MA TESOL program?
   Instructors _____
   Program content _____
   Interaction with native speakers
   Interaction with non-native speakers
   Administration _____

Teaching experience after receiving your MA TESOL degree.

1. What level(s) and course(s) did you teach after receiving your MA TESOL? For how long did you teach these classes/levels?

Reflectivity in the present

1. Do you feel that you teach differently now that you have received your MA TESOL?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, in which 1 is the lowest score and 10 is the highest, how would your rate the transferability/applicability of what you learned in your MA TESOL program to your teaching in your own classroom or in your own country?

APPENDIX B
Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. Why did you decide to teach ESL/EFL?
2. What would a "typical" day in your EFL/ESL class look like? What would you be doing and what would your students be doing? Would your materials be self-generated, published, or assigned? How many students would be in your class? How many hours a week would you teach these students? (For ESL teachers: Do you share a room with another teacher or do you have a room of your own?)
3. (For EFL students) Why did you choose to pursue your MA TESOL degree in the USA?
4. What made you choose your particular program in the USA?
5. Before you began your MA TESOL program, what were your personal, academic, and professional goals? What influenced you to establish these goals?
6. What courses did you take for your MA TESOL program? Were there prerequisite courses? Was there a pre-established sequence of courses?
7. Why did you take the elective classes that you took?
8. Did you wish you could have taken more elective courses? Which courses would you have taken? (prompt ideas: CALL, composition, music, art, etc.)
9. How did you like your MA TESOL program? What did you think about the courses you took?
10. In retrospect, what did you like most about your program when you were working on your MA TESOL? What did you like least?
11. While working in your MA TESOL program, did you think of anything about your program that could have been done differently? (prompt ideas: instructor could have taught a class differently, content of class could have been different/modified, a course should have been added or omitted --- NOTE: this is a hard question to answer!)
12. In your opinion have you ever taken classes in your MA TESOL program in which you questioned the applicability of the material of the material presented to your teaching experience in your home country? Elaborate, please.
13. (For EFL teachers) Did you have instructors in your MA TESOL program who had practical teaching experience in EFL?
14. (For ESL teachers)) Did you have instructors in your MA TESOL program who had practical teaching experience in ESL?
15. Were you able to implement the concepts and ideas of your MA TESOL program to your teaching experience after receiving your degree? If not, why?
16. How did you feel when you started teaching ESL or EFL right after graduation? How did you like teaching ESL or EFL students? Based on your teaching experience since receiving your MA TESOL, what were the most valuable things you learned from your program?
17. Did you have difficulty applying what you learned in your MA TESOL program to your teaching? If so what kind of difficulties did you face? Can you give an example?
18. What would you have done differently in your MA TESOL program now that you have teaching experience after graduating from your MA TESOL program? Are there courses you would have taken or dropped?
19. (For EFL teachers) Did you feel you were well-prepared to be an EFL teacher in your home country after you received your MA TESOL degree? Why or why not? (For ESL teachers) Did you feel you were well-prepared to be an ESL teacher after you received your MA TESOL degree? Why or why not?
1. Do you feel that your teaching has changed since you received your MA TESOL?

2. Based on your teaching experience after your MA TESOL degree, do you have any suggestions for modifying your MA TESOL program?
3. In retrospect, while you were working on your MA TESOL, what did you think would be most important for your teaching after you graduated? Did you use what you thought would be so important? If not, why?
4. Did you think you are/were a successful teacher? What made you as successful or unsuccessful as you feel you are?
5. Do you think your MA TESOL program made you a more successful teacher? Can you give an example that ties your MA TESOL program to a positive teaching experience?
6. Do you feel your MA TESOL program equally served the needs of EFL and ESL teachers or teachers-to-be? If yes, how so? If no, why not?
7. If there was such a program as TEFOL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language as opposed to TESOL) in the USA, would you take classes/pursue a degree in this field? Why?
8. If you could go back to your pre-MA TESOL program days, knowing what you know now, would you choose to pursue your MA TESOL? Would you choose your particular MA TESOL program?
9. Would you recommend your MA TESOL program to someone who would like to train to be an EFL teacher? Why/not? Would you recommend it to someone who would like to train to be an ESL teacher? Why/not?